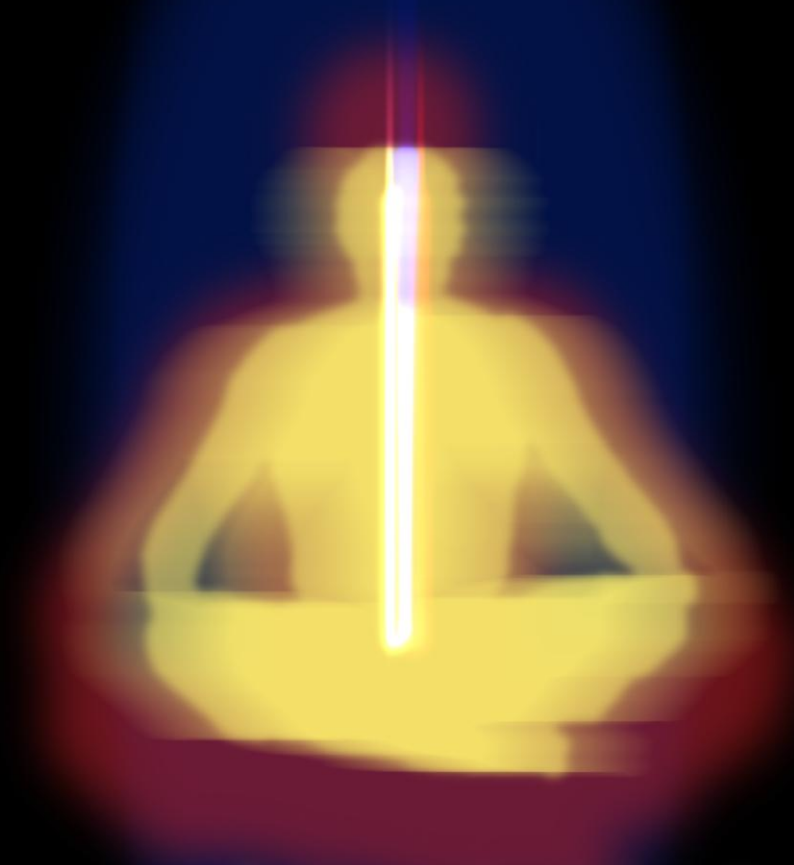


instructions on tummo



a compilation of advice by
loco austriaco

taken from posts originally found on
the kenneth folk dharma site

compiled and edited by tommy m

Instructions on Tummo

Originally Posted on Kenneth Folk Dharma by Loco Austriaco

<http://kennethfolkdharma.wetpaint.com/thread/4377529/%E2%80%8BTummo?offset=20&maxResults=20>

Preparation Phase:

1. Breath: One should be able hold the breath for 1min and 30 sec minimum before one begins the real exercise. Everyday practice should make it possible quickly. Hold your breath whenever you can and relax the whole body especially the neck, the back and the eyes. Avoid any pressure building up in the body. Get gentle when it gets harsh - Never go over 2 min.

When you inhale and hold, fill the lungs only 75%. Give already a 25% tension to the lower deep core (abdominal) muscles (*m. transversus abdominis*). These are the muscles in the exact middle between belly button and pubic bone.

When you exhale and hold, breath out and let the mind follow the breath, when the breath stops send the mind further into infinity (let it go and watch it vanish in infinity). Don't let the body collapse when you breath out, its important that the spine makes a kind of straightening up movement when you breathe out (self-elongating).

The sequence in that phenomena for the beginner will arise in the body is this:

Warmth - Shaking - Silence

You will know what I am talking about when you do Tummo, this circle can already happen by just holding the breath, it may not but it could happen. At the beginning there can arise a panic (to choke) probably between warmth and shaking or shaking and silence. IGNORE IT. If you master the fear of dying you will have a new level of tolerance for all fears soon. Fear will no longer make you do or avoid anything and later will not be a topic in your daily life.

Look at a watch and hold your breath. Nothing can happen to you in 1min 30 sec. Start slowly but get better quickly. Your willpower will increase soon to a tremendous level. This is the first step.

The traditional explanation is that the inner fire will burn through the blocked energy channels and this makes it painful. It's not true but it helps to see that the pain is something good. Whenever you avoid something in daily life it is because of this pain that you will feel in tummo. Get used to it. Get through it. It will disappear soon.

2. Pelvic muscles: Lay down on the back and let the knees fall to the outside, this will strengthen the pelvic floor and perineum.

a) At the beginning just pump the muscles fast and without any power but as long as you can. The moment you give the impulse, you've let go already. With time you will get a feeling for it, it feels nearly autonomous, like the body would do it by himself, like having a orgasm, like a twitch. Don't use power, let it intensify by itself. Let the rest of the body be relaxed, just train these muscles.

b) Then contract first the anal muscles at the backside, if they are fully contracted, contract them stronger; go forward and add the front "door", like you would to stop peeing, and hold it contracted for as long as possible. Contract stronger. Stronger! The picture that is taught is that of a bench vice; you can always do it stronger than you think. Let the rest of the body relax and keep the breath completely normal and gentle. It's important to separate the flow of breath from the contraction of the pelvic floor.

Within two weeks you will reach a level from where one can begin with tummo.

1. Do the exercises in the morning before you've eaten. Don't do them with something in the stomach! Don't do them in the evening, you will probably not be able to sleep.

2. You will already notice increased self-confidence, willpower, sexual lust, vital masculinity/femininity, appetite, potency and a strong feeling for your territory and knowing what you want, and what is yours.

Preparation Phase – Tsa Lung/Trul Khor:

It would be clever to let the body get used to the new levels of energy to reduce unwanted side-effects like itching in the forearms and legs, headache, stomach problems etc...but I know nobody will listen, so go to Amazon and buy "Awakening the Sacred Body" by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche and watch the DVD. One can use this exercises to warm the body up or reduce negative side-effects. If you have problems with the spine be very careful or don't do them all, because not all of them are ergonomic, a good physiotherapist will know. Then look at this:



There are also exercises to reduce side-effects called Trul Khor. With Trul Khor, Tsa Lung[1] and the Nine Breathings of Purification you would have the whole system of side-effect reducers. The truth is, despite of all hocus-pocus, they sometimes don't work. I will be posting a 'what-to-do-when-' later.

All these exercises come from originally from India, as does Tummo; they are just variations. Tummo is a variation of Maha Bandha (Mula Bandha+ Uddiyana Bandha+Jalandhara Bandha). The exercises around it are a Tibetan add-on. One can check the web for a description and how to do Maha Bandha.

Practice of Tummo - Standing Phase:

The practise is done standing, do not sit down at this point. It is important that the shaking can take over your whole body including the legs. If the legs are alive and full of feelings, they can give you the grounding in reality that you will need for all the upward-moving energy. Having a solid grounding in vibrant legs and feet is very important to not take off and get lost in all kinds of heady spiritual far from the world states of consciousness.

The stronger the base and the 'down-flow' capacity of the body, the higher you can go without losing contact with reality. The more energy you accumulate the better, but if the body generates more energy than you can eventually discharge, the difference in the energy budget will appear as free-floating fear. So, it is important that you develop enough discharge ability via productive sexual and aggressive self expression. Tummo will generate a lot of energy.

Stand like the yogis pictured here:



Right: Holding Breath

Left: Post-Exhale

The picture shows a yogi while holding the breath (hands up) and after having exhaled (hands down). Notice the position of the feet (important to get vibrations on the inner side

of the thigh to get a channel down into the ground for the sexual energy otherwise it will heat up your head.

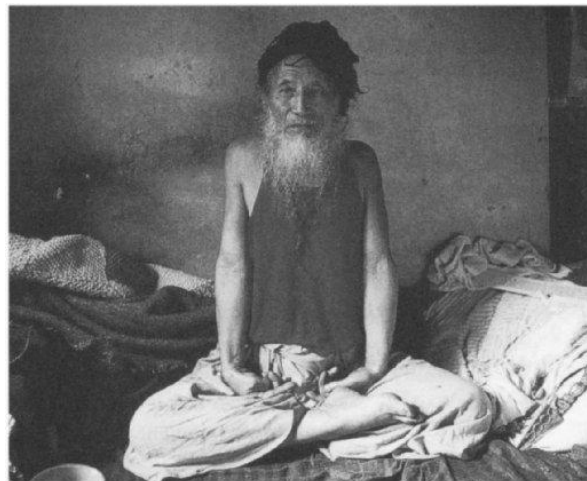
Tummo Handpositions

Also notice the finger position. To fine-tune your experience you can press different points from Tibetan medicine/TCM:

1. Press with the index finger the lateral place under the corner of the fingernail of the thumb - Lung 11: deepens breath, makes one feel confident and "invincible", brings breath into its natural flow

2. Press with the thumb the lateral place under the corner of the fingernail of the index finger - Large intestine. Harmonising energy flow in the stomach, if you have the feeling of heat in the eyes use it, makes the eyes clear und increase concentration

Tell me if you need more on this ... Also notice that when one day you would like to change to sitting tummo, the hand position is completely different like this:



Some people do it with "vajra fists" then, others simply extend the index finger strongly. Strange but it helps to stand through some waves of shaking until the waters become more peaceful...

Diaphragm:

1. Exhale.
2. Close your nose with two fingers.
3. Try to inhale without opening the nose.
4. Recognise your lower abdomen being pulled in direction of the spine and if you do it stronger, upwards towards the cranium.
5. Do it stronger to find the place where you can "lock it in". Keep it.
6. Train it a while to find out how it opens the heart after releasing it. Notice also the joy.

7. We will use this movement to transport "energy" from the root to the heart, cultivating the wild animal-like power.

Don't do it if you have problems with gastritis or hernias in that region, cure it first through medical treatment. There is an old saying in psychosomatics: "behind every neurosis there is a gastric ulcer", meaning that, statistically, 50% of the population have these problems and only recognise the changes in their psyche, never recognising the gastric problems as a cause.

Symptoms are: Irrascibility, constant bad mood, cynicism, returning hiccups, burping, farting and bad breath...also (Dalai) lamas often have these problems. Some say it comes from the butter-tea, some say it is from repression, some from tummo, I don't know, just keep an eye on it, to be safe; if you become angry and high-handed stop.

Spot of Concentration:

There are different opinions about where to transform the generated energies, namely bringing them into the central channel:

1. The most often heard is a spot four fingers below the navel in front of the spine, where it feels empty, bottomless, clear, open.
2. I prefer the middle of the perineum, where the contraction is strongest; feels very solid there.
3. Some say more up even in the heart.

Depends on the teacher. Simply concentrate on one of this points. If it helps you and you like naked red women, you can do the whole visualisation described in all books. I have seen the strongest result in people who simply concentrated on one spot while doing the practice.

Concepts:

Having an orgasm, dying and tummo are closely related processes. Tibetans tend to think in energetic terminology, not so much in scientific language, so I've posted a link here if you want to get informed on what they think happens during death and (partly) tummo:

Lama Ole Nydhal – "About Phowa": <http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=-5460210845278177464> [Editors Note: 31/10/12 - Link now lists as being private]

It's funny that Western science can easily explain the results also with death related processes. Simplified, the change of ratio oxygen/carbon dioxide through the change of breathing makes the brain think it doesn't have enough oxygen, i.e. is going to die, and the body reacts by flooding it with blood supply (vasodilatation).

That's why some people can get headaches when they change their breathing patterns or

do tummo; the change of blood pressure in the brain and the reaction of the vessels can result in headaches.

Maybe you have also heard of DMT (dimethyltryptamine) and its relation to spiritual perceptions and death? Let me know if want more of these details...

Antero: *"Thank you Loco Austriaco for very clear and interesting descriptions! All this sounds very familiar from my asana and pranayama practices. I presume that Maha Bandha + sucking in the abdomen (like in Nauli) is done right after the exhale and held during the whole retention and then released.*

Do you always do the retention after exhaling, or is it also done after inhaling, like in many pranayama practices? Or do you do just one exhale + retention for the maximum duration and then rest before doing it again?

How long did it take to get some results with this practice? What kinds of results did you get? How do you generate the warmth off the cushion?"

@Hi Antero, yes it's obvious that the Tibetan yogic techniques have their roots in India and are refinements and results of the, sometimes overbearing, Tibetan culture with all its love for adornment. Normally they would start as described above, then do some exercises, e.g. Tsa Lung, Nine Breathings of Purification (more or less pranayama) and then start with tummo. Later you just contract the muscles and hold the breath and should easily get the full energy boost, while sitting in the subway, watch TV etc.

The Core:

1. Stand as described (foot position shown in picture above), knees slightly bent.
2. Hands as described at the height of your shoulders (press the thumbnail under the corner of the index fingernail)
3. Inhale into the chest 75% (put the head a bit into the neck while inhaling to open the chest) and hold (gently, don't press the breath against something).
4. Pull the lower abdomen in and up 75%.
5. Press the chin against the chest (careful), tongue against roof of the mouth.
6. Contract the root as described.
7. Focus on one of the spots (I recommend perineum) or visualise the central channel.
8. Relax, wait.
9. Warmth - hold - relax, keep the sternum still a bit up like a "proud" prince.
10. Shaking - hold, 1st wave, stay, 2nd wave, stay.
11. Silence - hold as long as you can without creating pressure, pressure is normal while the shaking happens but shouldn't come from you.
12. Exhale (a bit stronger at the end of breath if you like, this is called 'arrowbreath', or [let it out] as it happens).
13. Let your body calm down, blood pressure/breath normalise, but don't wait too long for the next burning circle, the faster you do the next the easier/better it will be.

It's ok to get shaken off at the first, let's say, three trials, but then use your willpower to dive through and get into where you can feel that you have more space and the neurotic patterns are burned, where you overcome your flight instinct and get as a prize freedom.

We are crossing a river, if you jump off at the first wave you will not land on the other side of the river, you will land in the river. This is the place of unwanted side-effects where you can get more problems than you had in the beginning (we talk about how to solve them later)

I would make sure to get to the silence part after the 2nd wave, there you can rest safely and repeat the exercise.

Exhale/Inhale: The version of the "sucking in of the abdomen"/udiyana bandha that is used for tummo is done after inhaling 75% into the chest, that's why it is called "vase-breathing" (as you pointed out in the Indian version or "udiyana bandha" they pull in after exhaling completely). The breath is not like often thought and kept down in the belly but in the chest, so one can still pull the abdomen inward upward (which looks like an upside-down-vase). If one has used up all oxygen, breath in again - without letting go before - and get the missing 25%, so you can prolong the state, try to have both lungs filled with the same amount of air.

Retention: The retention is done after inhaling, same as in the Tsa Lung exercises (inhale - retention- movement - inhale rest 25%).

Time: This depends mainly on how long one can hold his breath, and this depends on 1) the psycho-physiological state (tensions in the body that become turbulences when the flow gets stronger/capacity of energy) and 2) How many red blood cells your body has developed through the preparations.

Some of the famous wonders that appear when you do tummo, e.g. fast growing hair and nails, increased speed of healing, regeneration and high vitality, have their cause in this Hypoxy-phenomena which are also used in the training of professional athletes in environments of low oxygen/high altitudes. You simply have more (rbc) oxygen in your system and over the mitochondrial system more energy in a physical sense. You get the same results (vitality, regeneration) if you book 10 sessions in a Hypoxy-studio.

You'll probably realize a pretty strong change after ten minutes when you have made it the first time through the 3rd wave of shaking.

To practice for one hour a day will change your life completely from the first day on. Just repeat the exercise for one hour. If this is too strong, start with 20 minutes and go up. Tibetan yogis have told me that this absolute silent void that appears, after maybe maximum of 25min, where you nearly can't move and don't know if you 'are' or not, might be the same as Nirodha Samappatti, I don't know, but somebody can probably tell me.

They say after six weeks with one-hour practice a day, one normally starts to kind of 'see' the energies and can regulate them. For me, it felt like there is suddenly a unbroken circuit in your trunk and head, a constant flow without leaks; no matter what your hands and feet

are doing or what your head is saying, the system feels like it is hermetically sealed and doesn't lose energy anymore. It's somehow closed, complete and incredibly strong.

Off-cushion: You will learn to do the exercise under all circumstances. The last Karmapa was famous for suddenly getting blue in the face in the middle of a negotiation. Now you know why...

My experience is that the side-effects vanish after some time, it becomes completely effortless and gentle. Everything becomes a source of lust somehow (and the girls love you, don't know how, but they somehow feel it).

Let me just add that the head should not get hot, this is a typical beginner's mistake. After the training the body is pretty warm, soft and relaxed, the head is clear and cool. It's not the kind of practice in which you have to ask yourself "ah, maybe it was this". The results and even the practice itself should be dramatic if done correctly. I have only seen people who couldn't handle it. Until now nobody said they don't feel anything. It doesn't hurt if you have what one could translate as a "hero or warrior mind", but be careful with yourself also.

There are also sects who do it very softly, even just imagining to contract the muscles and if you are very fine-tuned this could also be a second best way. It didn't work for me at all.

Also, if this is too strong or violent and you get more downsides than upside from it, go back to the preparation stage and train the pelvic muscles and the muscles of your abdomen (aka "core muscles") without too much breath-work. You can get beautiful fruits from that and the time will come when you want more and are able to. In Tibetan medicine there are also massages to cure what they call 'rlung illness' (side-effects). I never tried them, but for some also a combination with Roling[2] worked out fine to remove problems before they appear.

Tummo & Me:

I could clearly feel that it is a melting of energies, up and down, together. I wouldn't call it red and white, but the description of moonlight and sunset hits the spot. It feels like the merging of warm, rich, erotic sexual arousal and clean, pure, transparent consciousness. Holding the breath, you bring the white energy (tigle) down and the contraction of the root, the red, up - or better, it grows so much that it touches the other - and you hold them together. A kind of 'atomic core' melting starts immediately, and when you get to that point: No more suffering is possible. There is also left and right merging, head and butt are coming together and are reconnected in their natural way. I saw something like a very thin wire that starts to glow bright orange in the middle of the body, not the colours described in the texts. Not in the spine like kundalini, clearly in the middle of the body, the absolute middle of you. When energies are held into each other something funny happens: There appears a third, unlimited energy but at the same time the two others are a kind of used up or disappear so that there is a kind of vacuum in the middle of the new.

I had the typical dreams of human snakes talking to me, I saw them slipping out of their skin, they are the bouncers between the normal and the higher worlds, who decide who gets in the club. They are friendly; they are the rulers of all material things and the earth. That's

how the first maybe 10 days were, but I can't talk of all the later mystical experiences, there was something nearly everyday... its all accompanied by a very grounded down to earth feeling. I've probably forgotten the most but what I cant never forget is this 3rd energy, this clear light that is in everything, it is amazing, far beyond my possibilities. It's the reason why I am typing this.

(I am describing my experience, it is not identical with what some texts say that will happen.)

With the right amount of time for the preparation phase it is possible to get into the melting process before the discomfort can come up, in this case there is no suffering and no side-effects at all.

Metaphorically, you then jump so dynamically into the boat that it glides over the river and you fall out at the the other side of the river and have not seen the waters of suffering at all. There is a similar process while dying, if you see the clear light and take the chance you will not see any bardos at all. They say it's good to train this skill during this lifetime. Later the bodily heat will change (some weeks) into a kind of mystical warmth, which is in essence more a hmmm, yes, bodily or natural love for everything or love itself, but more on this and what to do later, when one is there.

Obobinde: *"Those posts are really inspiring, thank you.*

Traditionally with tummo as a foundation you then engage in the other yogas (clear light, illusory body ...) and it's supposed to fill all aspects of your life and to be the pinnacle of spiritual experiences, highway to enlightenment.

Reading your journal log, I see that you also engage in 'The Witness' and other practices. Is it because there was something missing or you felt that it was not as enlightening as it was supposed to be?

I'm asking this because I've noticed in a lot of biographic materials that masters of non dual traditions (Dzogchen and Mahamudra) were generally still practising at times tummo and related practices, so are these practices not self sufficient ?

Eager to read more from you."

A linear concept of human development implying the later stages in life are automatically the more developed or better doesn't fit so much into my experience. It would mean that at the end of life you have arrived at the peak of your skills. I don't believe that, I see a lot old people rather getting stiff, anxious and unconscious (also some Buddhists), people in their youth and lets say 30-50'ies rather blooming and I remember me having more skills in some ways as a child than I have now. It can sometimes develop in a linear way, but it doesn't necessarily. It also depends on coincidental factors from outside like illness, crisis, etc. I have a rather circular concept of development where one can find something, stay with it a while then leave it, circle away from it to something else and maybe come back later to it with more experience and a new perspective, initiating a new development. So only that I grew

older it doesn't necessarily mean that I have developed forward (in a sense of "being better" or closer to enlightenment).

I've kind of lost a bit the preference for enlightened states to not-enlightened.

Concerning Tummo:

The time when I practiced was one of the best in my life. I mean you can't do anything wrong, feeling strong and sensitive at the same time, having a rich bouquet of spiritual feelings, being relaxed, charismatic and attractive, unlimited rich sexual energy/life and girls running after you. I had times when I made friends with a handful of people a day, just by walking into a bar or the supermarket, starting a talk or letting them talk to you, getting involved in their lives, invited for dinner, simply because I had no fear. Doubt doesn't exist for the knowing. It's the queen of tantric practices. With time you get so strong that you kind of see through yourself, same like the witness (when its collapsing).

If tummo is a waste of time, it is the best way to waste your time I can imagine (if done right). You live life to the fullest in every sense, every moment is a natural expression of yourself. I can recommend that. Live all your unfulfilled wishes and learn from the new experiences you make with them. If you like, or don't. Learning or development is not a must, only a lust then.

After maybe a year of daily practice, I stopped because I felt that nothing could change the pleasure I was experiencing and I felt fully (unchangeably) enlightened. It turned out that after some weeks, the system got leaks again. I first lost contact with this clearness, then to the 'magic' power, but I also enjoyed somehow the going down into samsara, even the suffering is pleasant as it is a nice variety for someone who knows he is indestructible. I became more normal every day. So it seems I was not enlightened or enlightenment is not an unchanging achievement, we will see what happens next ... already some years have passed since then ...

Antero: "I have been testing doing Tummo and have found it to be similar to many pranayama exercises that I have previously done, although it seems to generate warmth more efficiently than for example Bhastrika (bellows) pranayama and is not so tiring to practice."

It seems to me that doing Tummo standing makes it more effective and arcing the chest is an important feature, whether it is done standing or sitting. Why is the retention done only after inhaling? Sucking in the stomach feels a bit forced even if the breath is inhaled mostly in the chest area."

- Yes, if one includes the bandhas into the pranayama it should feel similar. I don't know if they keep the breath retention as long as the Tibetans. (I haven't tried Bhastrika Yoga, just googled it.)

- Yes, standing develops the emotional vitality of the legs which are important to get a feeling to "be full of life" and vibrant connection to the ground (reality). One maybe knows

this feeling from skiing or running. Yes, the arcing of the chest is very essential. Inhaled: I think it is probably because one is able to hold the breath longer with some oxygen in the lungs. I tried both and they both work but are not the same for me, one feels more rich and one more fresh. The sucking in of the stomach is not done as strongly as in udiyana bandha where you nearly touch the heart.

Antero: *"When the retention is lengthened over one minute, my stomach starts contracting rhythmically. Should I try to control this movement or let it happen? It is not weakening the control of the bandhas but rather strengthening them. How tightly should one hold moola Bandha? Tight in a relaxed manner or super tight?"*

I wonder if the visualization part has to do with accessing the Tummo off the cushion. If I train my mind to associate the visualization of the rising warm red energy to the actual experience of getting warm, that would train me to get the same energy moving just by using the visualization."

- Over one minute/contraction, yes that is when the real tummo starts. Somebody who has as much experience with yoga as you has it probably easier to stay a bit longer because of gentler reactions, but it depends also on other factors. You just let the contractions happens, just let the body shake off and keep the bandhas. The traditional explanation is that the energy can not leave the body because of the closing of the 'gates' and now burns its way through the clogged channels. The contractions are just the beginning, they will stop after some time and open into a void. The moola bandha is super tight. It helps to get through the shaking, stay with it. The rest of the body is allowed to move and shake like a snake, but you will notice that if you don't let it move/control it a bit, the shaking goes more to the inside and somehow targets your deepest soul. It's less excessive but very, very intense, personal and deeply touching the innermost parts. It just flows into everywhere, where one thought he could hide his whole life and brings all kinds of rainbow coloured blessings.

- The traditional visualisation is quite a bit complicated. It includes a Tibetan letter, a flame, falling drops and all this. Do you mean this visualisation?

By the way: if you do it while having an orgasm a firework of bright lightning joy will start off and what the boxers call the second wind will appear immediately.

EDIT: As Antero said, the right arc of the chest is important, stay a bit upright/proud/sternum up, when you pull in the belly.

[Editors Note: The thread seems to veer off into discussing a Tantric practice at this point but I've included it since it's very practical and informative.]

They then went on to what could be translated as "(bodily) union" exercises quickly afterwards, the fastest way to full enlightenment, not wasting any time.

The beginning exercise goes like this: Maybe you have seen Tibetan thangkas with two Buddhas sitting in union? That's the position, perceive/visualise your partner as a

deity/dakini/female Buddha or simply as perfect, put your mouths on each others like kissing and keep them sealed. When your partner exhales, you inhale their breath; when you exhale, they inhale your breath. Keep on doing this, it feels a bit like you don't have to breathe anymore because your partner is moving your lungs, effortless and oceanic. Both visualize a stream of energy when you f.e. exhale, from your lips to her lips, through her spine to the pelvis to your pelvis-spine to your lips.

I read in a text by the female translator of Kalu Rinpoche that he always tried to convince her to do these exercises with him, so it seems that motivation for practice comes by itself when one reaches the highest teachings...at least for one. But we are shortcutting now the shortcut of the shortcut.

Trouble Shooting - 'Wrong' Belly Breathing:

Keep a light tonus of 25% of the maximum contraction in the *musculus transversus abdominis* (lower abdomen, between belly button and pelvic bone, deep layer) whatever you do in daily life. When you stand up and put your weight forward on the toes, you can feel that this muscle is activated autonomously by your body to gain stability (it feels a bit "under the belly"). This is the exact and correct amount of tonus to maintain. It should feel natural and effortless. Also, pull in the belly while doing the Tummo to avoid misguiding the "energy", i.e. awareness.

If you look into the human anatomy you can clearly see that there is no such thing as deep belly-breathing while you are standing or active during everyday life. If you teach your body artificially to keep the deep belly-breathing during daily life, your abdominal muscles cannot carry their part of your weight and protect your spine. This means the back-muscles have to carry all the weight and will become stiffer. They then cannot elastically support your breath movement with expansion and contraction, massaging the whole system of spine, liquor, brain. Because of this stiffness, the breath will go even further forward (no elasticity/space in the back) in the direction of the belly. Ironically one can experience this as a success because you then have more space to breath again. With time, back problems may appear and the inner organs have the tendency to fall more and more forward. The problem is not only that it doesn't look so good, but it costs a lot of energy, it is not healthy and is a hindrance to developing the true full breath. If you are experiencing a lack of energy or depression after starting spiritual practices, this can be a possible cause. See if it gets better when you re-strengthen your abdominal muscles via the usual exercises and keep a tonus of 25% during activities. It should work quickly within days if this was the problem. I know that for most people this wrong belly breathing feels like progress because it is more comfortable than the fast, short, flat breathing that is usual in our society, but it is not.

The Indians didn't bring up the ideology of the "always deep belly breathing". When Buddhism came to China and Japan, into a culture in which control and calmness was highest priority, they put the emphasis on it and poisoned the spiritual traditions with it. They misused the skill to calm down the mind to suppress emotions, free self-expression and a natural sexuality. ("Zen-disease": stiff spine results in a rigid character, that then has to be calmed down constantly with forward belly breathing - vicious circle).

There is a healthy way to breath freely without "forward belly breathing":

The right direction is more down into the pelvis. If your pelvic muscles become free and relaxed over time, your breath will touch a spot at the bottom which is very lustful when you breathe in. Of course it is a kind of sexual feeling but, sexual or not, don't get hysterical. It is a very nice and naturally pleasant, sensual feeling at the end of every in-breath. A part of the breath goes also into the sides (flanks) and into the back; don't push the breath down, it will go there by itself if you do what is necessary.

Nearly every orthopaedist or physiotherapist in the world will tell you to keep a muscle tonus in the abdomen and train your abdominal core. The problem is that most people have too much tension in the pelvis – related to sexual fears and fears to be let go of - to be able to get the full capacity of breath using the room down there. The old Indians were right when they kept the tonus in the belly and waited for the release of the inner pelvic muscles through training (tummo), stretching/yoga and psychological/spiritual development.

Normal belly breathing: In deep states of rest like when lying down or sleeping it is of course physiological and healthy to breath deeply into the belly and give up all tonus, because you have no weight to carry and you do not need support. But when you stand up and try to rescue the calmness into everyday life via this wrong breathing technique, all kinds of problems from depression to back pain can appear, and I won't tell you what it does to your right thalamus. It is also normal to have some belly breathing immediately after releasing the held breath (in tummo-training), cause the body will open all blockages and give up all tensions - roof of mouth, throat, chest, diaphragm, belly, back, bottom of pelvis - to get full breath capacity and enough oxygen for the brain.

I say all this here because, in some versions of tummo, the vase-breathing technique is described as putting the air in the belly and pushing downward. This won't work in this simpleness and from a modern perspective it encourages the wrong breathing pattern after practice. It will result in various unwanted side-effects that a lot of people are afraid of and can make them drop out before even getting a taste of the power of the practice. This minimal 'push down' effect they are looking for is what I described above as touching a spot of lust in the pelvis and will appear naturally and quickly if one doesn't disturb the breath.

Alex Weith: *"Thanks a lot, Loco, for these detailed explanations. From what I can tell, the practice of tummo is very similar to what Hatha Yoga calls Shakti Chalani Mudra. No wonder, the Hatha Yoga tradition of the Nath Sampradaya is intimately connect with the Maha Siddhas.*

There are several descriptions of Shakti Chalani Mudra in the yoga shatras, but the idea is always to unite prana (upward flowing energy between vishudhi and manipur) and apana (down flowing energy between muladhara and manipur) in samana (energy around manipur). As a result, the two vayus (prana and apana) united by Mahabandha generate intense heat that suffocated the sleeping shakti kundalini who has no other choice but to awaken and rise within the sushumna nadi like a fierce cobra.

My strongest experience with it was more than a year ago, after a meeting with Kenneth at his place. Back in my hotel room in NYC, I felt a strong chakra activity and decided to integrate them in my field of awareness. I then decided to unite prana and apana in the navel, holding the breath with mulabandha. I then dropped the heat on muladhara chakra. With a short exhale, I then shot the energy along the spine above the crown chakra.

What happened then is the the energy came back to muladhara. I then felt a warm liquid rising up along the spine. When it reached the head space it felt like cosmic orgasm going on an on for 15 or 20 minutes. My body was shaking like a leaf. I then moved the energy to the heart and felt a sense of unconditional love. It then merged with emptiness and my body felt transparent, merging with the environment. The sense of self dissolved into this blissful all pervading stillness.

Last night, I experienced the same results (emptiness and bliss), integrating the awareness of all chakras into the natural state (Mahamudra)."

Yes, that seems to be it! In my case, there is a feeling of something going down first (coming completely into reality), I don't experience the going up as strong as it is often described, I just feel the results in the head and crown and above and then the 'warm rain' coming down again from somewhere in cosmos/sky above.

If you have already made the strong version of the experience, the art is now to prolong it.

I don't recommend the visualisations, because if people visualise a flame in their stomach all that happens is that the body releases acid into their stomach and creates a hot, burning feeling there and that is the opposite of what should happen. But if one knows what is meant, it sometimes works. It seems better to me to simply prolong the exercise and use the new energy to create even more with it (like a nuclear plant).

Trouble Shooting – Traditional “Don’ts”:

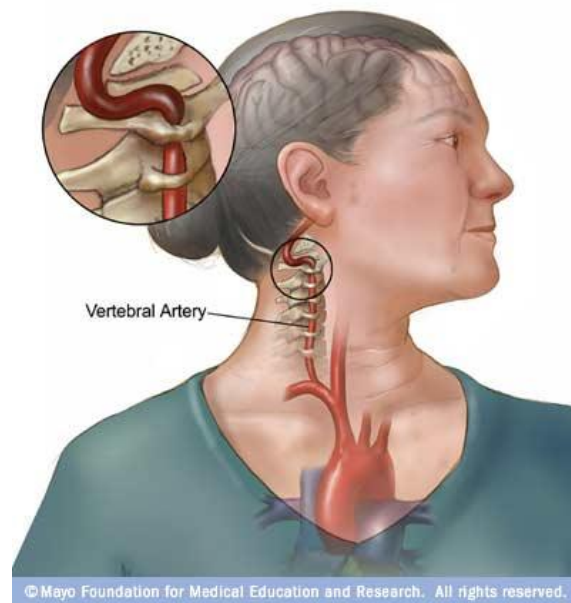
I post them here just to complete the topic. In my case most of this advice didn't make a difference, don't think about them if you have no problems. Most of the people don't. I just post them, maybe for somebody there is a hint. Texts mention following “Don'ts” for tummo-practice:

- Mind direct sun and heat, especially on the head, especially when you have no hair.
- Don't eat before practice.
- Protein rich diet, less carbohydrate. (I read that the faces of Europeans looked pretty stupid when the first "vegetarian" Tibetan lamas came to Europe and conquered a chicken grill at the roadside.)
- Mind lifting and carrying heavy weights.
- Mind wearing hot clothes.
- Mind sexual activity or too much sexual activity. (I would say hyper-excessive sexuality that you are suddenly capable of.)

The head-rotation: Let me just say that one should do this rotation less extreme than it is

shown in the video [Editors Note: Tsa Lung link – See footnote [1]]. Circle around half of the diameter shown in the video or less, and avoid a bit the backward circling, stay more forward. Do it slow and careful.

The spiritual result will be the same or better. If one doesn't stay healthy one will be unable to do the exercise at all. The joints of the spine in this region are pretty fragile (because it has to carry only the weight of the head at this level, not the whole upper body. If one joint is a bit blocked the upper or lower has to take over and can be overused/damaged, you then can get problems with the nerves or a certain artery that provides blood to your brain) you can see it here:



Especially the extreme backward circling is overdone in the video. If you want to do it more extreme and take the risks, wait if you have absolutely no problems after a few weeks of gentle circling. You have an unusual good spine then, but I wouldn't recommend it.

Trouble Shooting – Sleeplessness:

Giragirasol: *"Does anyone have suggestions of what to do with the lack of need for sleep that seems to come with these kind of practices? I would read, but I read and write intensively for work, and my eyes can't take much more. I meditate sometimes, just to kill time. I guess I could get back into drawing/art or something else beautiful but not too brain-intensive (and quiet, given I tend to be awake for several hours in the middle of the night). My need for sleep generally drops to about 5 hours from 8 when I do this kind of practice, and often in short segments, a few hours at a time, then wakeful again."*

Practice only in the morning after waking up.

Yes, it is common. In my case, after a week or two the sleep gets much better than it was before. If I practice in the morning I sleep perfect but still shorter than before. It is also a usual result of other meditations to change the sleep pattern, it just happens faster here.

If you sleep less than five hours a day, I would slow down the practice a bit because it could be a sign that you might become a bit hypomanic and that the change is too fast for your system. Keep practicing a bit shorter or even every second day; just slow down a bit.

Even more important: Work with your legs to get grounding again (running and cross-training are good) in the time that you have won. "Get Grounded" is the topic then; a bit too much energy builds up because the 'lightning rod' into earth/reality has not grown with the rest of the system yet. All kinds of exercises that make the legs shake, shiver and vibrate for a longer period of time and give them endurance, will help.

Here is a link for a well-known grounding exercise:

<http://abel.hive.no/trumpet/warmup/grounding.html>

[Taken from the website: *This exercise is taken from the book "The Way To Vibrant Health" by Alexander Lowen and Leslie Lowen. Lowen says that similar exercises [are] done by practitioners of T'ai-Chi. They aim at grounding the individual and giving him a sense of harmony with the universe.*]

[1] <https://vimeo.com/28258180>

[2] <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rolfing>

Editors Note: I've edited and reformatted elements of these posts and attempted to fix grammar and spelling errors for clarity so that these instructions can stand alone as a set of basic guidelines. The author and O.P., Loco Austriaco, is clearly experienced and familiar with the techniques as well as the phenomenology of the practice but, and I mean no offence or criticism whatsoever here, it's clear that English is not their first language and so there are some minor issues which I've tried to correct purely to ensure that this very useful, practical and down-to-earth advice can be put to good use. These changes have included restructuring sentences, adjusting the phrasing in places to clarify the basic instruction, adding or correcting punctuation, and generally cleaning it up for easier reading. I hope that the author will not object to the basic changes I've made in the interest of readability, the original post with all the original content and links is presented at the beginning of the post and so comparison can be made and corrections suggested should there be a need for it.

I've restructured the thread itself and tried to create a sequential presentation based on the authors use of sub-headings. I've also tried to keep Q&A-type exchanges relating specifically to the practical side of tummo within the main section, but other exchanges are included below. The pictures which the author and contributors had linked to in the original posts are now available within the document itself, however the videos need to be viewed externally as I don't have the facility to embed them at present.

I've added some additional material from the same thread by other users of Kenneth's site. There are some more details, instructions, exchanges and opinions which may be useful to someone but which I've kept separate from the main instructions, mainly to maintain the flow and general structure Loco Austriaco has tried to present.

Tommy M – 31/10/12

Triplethink: *"Years ago I had a book on this, the title was simply "Tummo". It was a small book similar to one of the thin BPS tract books. It was by a Trungpa someone or other and appeared authentic enough. As far as I recall, the instructions were more or less along the lines indicated in Kenneth's Post at No.17. A lot of visualizations. I didn't put any serious effort into trying it. I read it for comparisons sake and it wasn't a technique that interested me. I do live in Canada and have spent many winters in -40C to -80C weather. I found I could get the same kinds of effects more readily using Taoist breath techniques my Tai Chi/Qi Gong teacher taught us. Basically those techniques reverse the type of vase breathing technique used in some Buddhist breath techniques. What this involves is initially exhaling completely and compressing the chest and abdomen fully, squeezing out all air entirely. Then breathing in very slowly one draws air deep down to the bottom of the abdomen and packing the air very tightly by allowing the abdomen and then the chest to expand only when the air pressure is so great that it forces the chest open even though one is fully resisting the expansion with the surrounding abdominal musculature. Then when one has packed the maximum air into that space with the minimum of expansion one slowly allows the air to exhale and escape and while doing so one begins to slowly push the muscles out again from the bottom of the abdomen so that when the air is finally fully pushed out the belly is also pushed out. So this is basically the reverse of how the abdomen and chest would naturally move with the inflow and outflow of air. It takes a while to get a feel for this but once you get it working correctly you should very rapidly start to experience heat build-up throughout the body. If you continue in this way you will eventually become very hot and begin sweating and so on. I has worked for me even walking in very cold outdoor weather."*

Jigme Sengye: *"Trying to do Tsa lung practice without a teacher according to a book is a great way to screw yourself up and end up with serious health problems. One of the problems with discussing it online is that some Tibetan lineages impose strict secrecy rules on their students. The Bonpos seem to have different rules regarding talking about the practice. Many years ago I saw on ligmincha.org that one of Tenzin Wangyal's students was teaching Trul Khor with the goal of getting students to the point that they could also teach it. I noticed that he just released a book and DVD on the subject called Awakening the Sacred Body."*

Obobinde: *"The best books on the subject are:*

"The Bliss of Inner Fire" by Lama Thubten Yeshe (very practice oriented)

"The Six Yogas of Naropa" by Glenn H. Mullin (very thorough on theory)

But is has to be known that the production of heat is not a goal it is just a by-product (useful under certain circumstances).

The inner fire is used as a kind of platform from which the other high tantric practices are implemented such as : the clear light, the illusory body, the transfer and ejection of consciousness, the dream practices, the union practices (practices of tantra with a female partner), and the practice of bardo or intermediate state (dream practice).

As stated in other messages it is usually taught during the three year retreat but in the bonpo tradition you can access these teaching more easily.

Anyway these practices should not be reduced to some breathing practices which warm you up, the subject is much deeper."

Obobinde: *"Hello Loco ,thank you a lot for the descriptions. Normally these practises are obtained only after the numerous preliminaries and then you need a minimum proficiency in the creation phase yoga (visualizing yourself as a deity). Finally the empowerment which is (according to the traditions) of utmost importance for many reasons, all of this topped by a vow of secrecy.*

A part of me is very happy of this disclosure and openness in the view of pragmatic spiritual paths and another part is wondering, maybe all this traditional stuff around the core practices (preliminaries, vows,...) are in fact really needed and maybe the practitioner and the one disclosing instructions maybe at risk in one way or another?

Wow, I probably sound really conservative now, sorry.

Have you learned these during the traditional three-year retreat? And if not, which teacher is giving these instructions? Maybe they will come to Europe someday?

Anyway, thank you."

Loco Austriaco: *"Yes, and there is much more to come.... I just didn't have the time to type it all in, but the description is by far not complete. Well it took me years to learn all about it. Different sects have their different ways to do things, at least the scientific explanation of phenomena made the decision easier which variation is the best to begin with.*

I also have two souls in my heart and really hesitated to make it public because of several reasons, but when it comes to the decision, I follow the rule to give everything useful I have to everybody who has a minimum chance to use it.

There are various Tibetan and Western masters around the world who do not keep useful things for themselves. The most important thing is not get it from somebody who tries to create a dependency in you, by only telling you the half of the truth. The results feel very magical yes, but there is no need to get superstitious. negative side-effects can make you afraid and [you might] fall into magical thinking but there is no more need to, if you know enough. 111,111 prostrations will not help you in any way when things get 'really hot'... and they will"

Alex Weith's take on Giragirasol's question regarding sleeplessness after doing tummo:

"This is a 'normal' side effect. According to the Chinese energy model, it is the outcome of a transformation of "Chi" energy (located in the heart) into "Shen" energy (in the head space), the latter being the energy of the mind that generate mental clarity (and psychic powers)."

Alex Weith: *"I just tried tummo the way you describe it, but in the half-lotus posture. That stuff is mind-blowing!!*

I felt the shaking two, three or four times, exactly like those Russian tummo yogis on YouTube, then the energy rising along the spine, the bliss, the pouring of cool water-like energy coming down from the heavens over my head, and then this emptiness and clarity where everything manifests as a magical display of the Mind."

Loco Austriaco: *"Hi Alex! Yes, very good!!*

It could be that you are already in a place from where it becomes easier and easier. The worst part is usually the beginning. If you can keep the system warm, there could be a chance - it's difficult to say over the internet - that you can go all the way through without bigger problems.

- *How long was the time between the contractions and how long did one last? how long can you hold your breath?*
- *Where in the body have you felt them? What was the movement that resulted? sideways, forward/backward?*
- *Could you describe the emptiness? Was it a feeling 'like' emptiness or was it bodily emptiness like when you pull the plug out of electric machine?*
- *I've found a Russian video. it seems they are doing a Hinduistic version. If you like, try also the Tibetan sitting posture. I will try to describe it later, most people like it.*

Thank you."

Alex Weith: *"Thank you for your encouragement, Loco, as well as for your openness to share this. I can answer your questions as follows:*

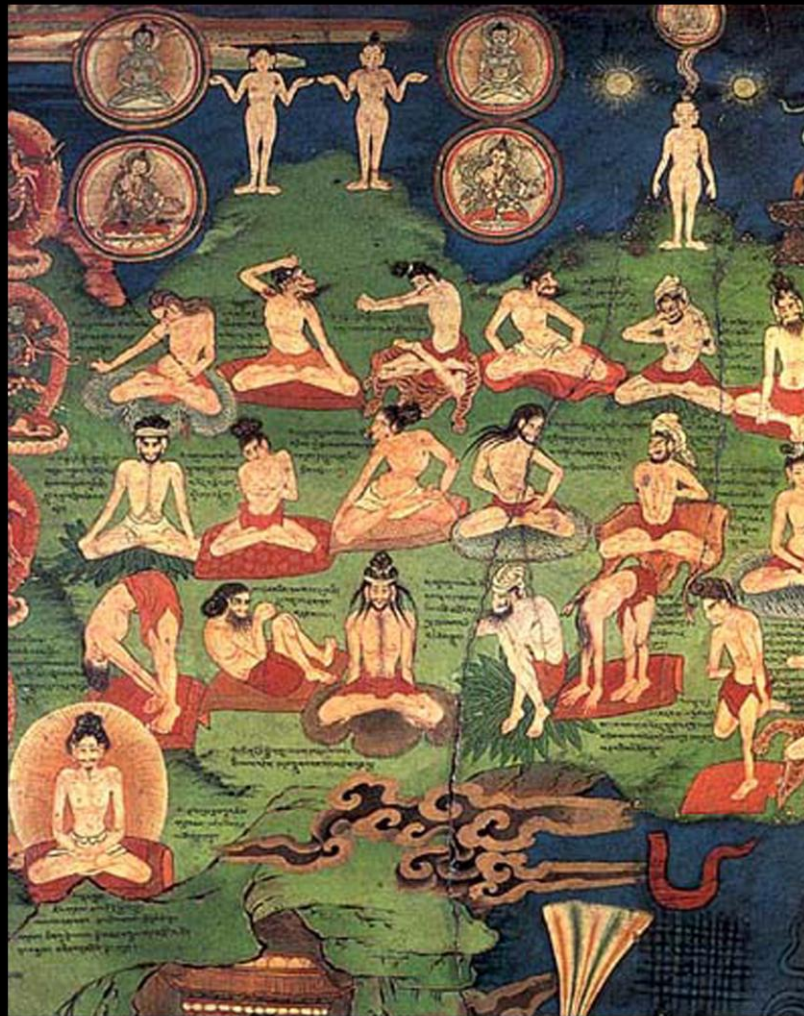
- *I would say that the contractions lasted for about 5 to 10 seconds, with about 10 seconds between contractions.*
- *I haven't done much pranayama lately, but I can hold my breath for at least 90 seconds.*
- *The contractions were felt around the navel chakra, but involved the whole lower abdomen, forward and backward, like a spontaneous bhasrika.*
- *By emptiness, I mean the fading away of the sense of self, while everything from the body to the world outside feels transparent, insubstantial and almost dreamlike, with a deep sense of silence and clarity.*
- *Since I was trained in Hatha Yoga by an Indian yogi of Swami Satyananda Sarasvati's Bihar Yoga Bharati, I am used to the Hindu version. I made the vajra fist mudra however and will learn the Tibetan sitting posture.*

I started it in the evening last night and, the first time, exhaled the energy through the crown chakra. I felt a bit of pressure there afterward, but the first Tsa Lung exercise posted on your video cleared it. My sleep was shallow due to excessive energy. I therefore decided to rearrange my schedule to practice in the morning. Accordingly, I started at 6am this morning and feel great."

If anyone has any suggestions, corrections or want their information to be removed, please contact Tommy M: alayapragmatica@gmail.com

Artwork by Hype Napungra

The words in these edited posts are the opinions of their authors, they contain detailed descriptions of advanced yogic practices which should not be taken lightly or played around with casually. Tummo is not a beginners practice and should be researched thoroughly before applying these techniques, ideally in the presence of a teacher if you're able to find one. This stuff can potentially mess you up if not approached with respect and an understanding of attention, concentration, and this immediate, bare sensate experience.



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